

Do I Dare Disturb the Universe?
Social Structures, Choices, and Consequences

Submitted December 9, 2008

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ELAN 7408

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Rationale

When Eliot's (1917) J. Alfred Prufrock initially asked "Do I dare disturb the universe?," he was referring obliquely to Eliot's own poetic ambitions, which would "disturb the universe" which contained the classics (p. 1102-5). Even though we do not all dream of being poets, the question itself is one which we ask every day of our lives, especially as it pertains to how we fit in the society that surrounds us. Social structures, those institutions and traditions that are created and maintained through social means, pervade our lives in every way imaginable, a statement that holds just as true for students as it does for adults. From overt institutions such as the government and education to more subtle aspects such as day-after-Thanksgiving sales and vocabulary quizzes, students are confronted with a plethora of structures that have been in place long before they were born and will remain long after they are gone. The question of whether to conform to the expectations these structures represent or rebel against them is one that they will face every day of their lives. Whichever choice they make, however, students should recognize that choices have consequences of which they may or may not be aware. Through an examination of the social structures present in the literature that they shall read and in their own lives, the students will become more aware of their own relation to these structures and more ready to interact with them once they finish high school.

In high school, students can easily become caught in the minutia of daily life. Faced with everyday activities such as sports, schoolwork, and social activities, students may find it difficult to think about how these aspects of their lives interact with each other in a larger sense. This unit, therefore, focuses more on taking a step

back from the immediate and looking at the big picture instead. Charles Lemert (2005), a sociologist, explains the dual nature of social structures: “Whatever our differences from each other, all of us live in society with others. In the abstract, society is a mystery. But in the press of daily life, society is an innocent bumping against others” (p. xii). Although societal structures are often thought of as being unknowable, as being the “myster[ies]” Lemert speaks of, they do have an effect on our everyday lives. Although people do not generally regard these occurrences, this subtle “bumping against others,” as being the result of such large, abstract structures, oftentimes they are. Lemert’s words act as a microscope towards sociology, showing the social atoms that make up the larger abstract sociological molecule; I intend for my students to use this same principle as a telescope instead, looking up at the galaxy of stars from our one little planet. The commonplace and the abstract factors of these social structures are intertwined, and this dual nature is an aspect that students should realize before they enter society and the workplace at large. This unit would provide a solid background for individual exploration into any of a number of these “social things,” as Lemert terms them, which define our lives. We all find ourselves limited and constrained by traditions and rules, spoken and unspoken, seemingly beyond our control, and I hope to give students the ability to look at the larger meaning of their lives.

Just being able to identify the presence of these structures, however, is not enough. Every day, students interact with these structures in myriad ways and must make choices accordingly. While many of these choices may be inconsequential in the larger scheme of life, some choices may have dramatic

consequences. Lisa Delpit (1988), for example, argues that students not of the dominant culture should “be encouraged to understand the value of the code they already possess as well as to understand the power realities in this country” (p. 293). She sees the social structures of race and class as hindering the ability of students who does not possess the “code” currently in power to work within the larger dominant society. In the rest of her article, she describes the choices teachers make in terms of these codes and how it differs based on a teacher’s position within this social structure. All of these instances, however, do involve the premise that I stated above: there are structures in place, and individuals, whether they are teachers or students, must make choices within them and decide for themselves how best to respond. For Delpit, the primary social structure involved is race, but the basic generalization holds true for all of the structures that students will face.

Even though class time will focus primarily upon the appearances of these structures within literature, the discussions surrounding the topic should provide a framework, which students can use to examine the social structures in their own lives. Throughout their lives, students have been figuring out where they fit within the structures that surround them. As Bruce Pirie (1997) notes,

We are none of us romantic individuals, unfettered in the face of the universe. Rather, we are thickly entangled (or ‘situated’) in complex contexts, etched by traces of the worlds around us. The fingerprint of individuality lies precisely in the map of those traces. (p. 10).

Pirie’s concept of “individuality” centers around the combination of experiences and expectations, the “complex contexts,” which have shaped each one of us. His choice

of “entangle[ment]” in reference to these structures is an apt metaphor; escaping the expectations and rules which define our lives is nigh impossible. The ideas and concepts in this unit, therefore, attempt to give students a chance to examine themselves and their society in a way that will enable them to make sense of the web that Pirie describes. As we work our way through the examples that literature provides, they should be able to use these skills and knowledge to look at their own lives from a new perspective.

While my unit topic is justifiable from a number of perspectives, one fault that critics could potentially focus on is my approach toward it. I chose to include a number of varying assessments ranging from literary analysis to reading journals, and, depending on the educational beliefs of the parent, administrator, or student, any of my choices could be seen as a waste of class time. Earlier in the semester, a student approached me asking why they had to read books written by other people rather than simply teaching reading and writing. To this student, my literary analysis paper, in which they analyze the appearance of a social structure in a book that they have not read in class, would be worthless. If the primary goal of an English teacher were to impart only those skills needed for communication, then this objection would be a valid one. Similarly, the parents of a student bound for college may not see the need for their child to complete a reading journal or a creative writing assignment. It is the general belief, after all, that college writing classes are focused primarily on critical analysis and close readings of texts. While the literary analysis fits these criteria and the parents’ image of their child’s future,

the reading journals and creative writing assignment do not. These assessments would therefore be considered “fluff” and not be seen as serving a useful purpose.

The assessments and skill sets involved in this unit do focus largely on analysis. As one of the primary goals for this unit is for students to be able to think critically about these structures, the literary analysis in which students analyze the presence of a structure in a work of literature we have not read is a useful assessment towards this end. In the “Reading and American literature” portion of the 11th grade Georgia Performance Standards, a form of the verb “to analyze” is mentioned at least twenty-one times, almost twice the number of the next most mentioned verb (“American literature”). This focus on analysis shows that the state sees this aspect as being essential to the practice of reading. As this unit is intended for an eleventh-grade class, to ignore analytical focus would be a failure to fulfill the expectations set before myself as a teacher. I included, therefore, a literary analysis assignment as one of their major assessments in order to meet this requirement. While the students may lament the fact that they actually have to *think* about *books*, that analysis and critical thinking skills are important to the Georgia Department of Education and therefore to the job security of a teacher is indisputable.

Although analysis is important, however, I do not want to ignore the personal connections the students make with the texts that they are reading and their exploration of how the material fits in their own lives. Both of these aspects are important to how we read and make meaning of our lives. Focusing only on the text itself can lead to students feeling disheartened. Probst (1992) agrees: “[Students] are doomed to fail. As fallible, imperfect, flawed readers, trapped within our own

history, limited by what our unique experience has provided for us and withheld from us, we have little hope of achieving [a] perfect reading” (p. 55). This “perfect reading,” which comes from reading the text exactly as it was intended to be read, is a feat that is often expected of students. In literary analysis, where critical thought and close reading are prized, this concept holds doubly true. Probst’s statement shows that this sort of goal can be quite challenging, especially if the limitations readers face are not acknowledged. Allowing students to use their own experiences and responses to the text, an approach known as reader response, lets readers interact with literature in a way that close reading and critical analysis do not. As Appleman (2000) notes, reader response “provided students with a way to engage personally with literature, opened up the possibility of multiple interpretations of individual texts and made our students the readers” (p. 55). The idea that there are multiple interpretations of texts is one that a sheer focus on critical analysis often ignores. To incorporate these ideas, I have included both a reading journal and a piece of creative writing as major assessments in addition to the literary analysis. She cautions, however, that it should not become more than “*a way of reading texts*” (p. 55). Like any approach, it should be used in conjunction with a number of other differing approaches. Through my combination of both critical analysis and reader response, I have tried to introduce moderation into my assessment practices.

Much like my assessments, the choices I have made for the texts used in the unit are also justifiable. As eleventh-grade literature courses traditionally focus on American Literature, I have attempted to include a wide variety of American and North American authors and a plethora of literary forms. As the eleventh-grade

Georgia standards state, students should read a “variety of texts representative of different genres” (“American literature,” p. 3). With my inclusion of genres ranging from poetry to plays, the students will be exposed to a number of differing genres while remaining focused on the theme of the course.

All of these skills contained within this unit--identifying social structures, understanding the choices within them and what consequences may follow, and being able to apply this knowledge to their own lives--are essential in real life. It is therefore both relevant to the students’ lives and in preparation for their future needs. Both of these reasons are good justifications for the creation of a unit focusing on them (Smagorinsky, 2008, pp. 44-5). Students encounter and engage with social structures every day of their lives, and the skills included are vital to their ability to understand and interact within those structures. Through the use of a variety of approaches, students should be able to apply these concepts to their own lives and, perhaps, disturb the universe if they dare.

References

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Texts

- “The Yellow Wallpaper,” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman [short story]
- “The Story of an Hour,” by Kate Chopin [short story]
- “Spelling,” by Margaret Atwood [poem]
- “The Game,” by Judith Ortiz Cofer [poem]
- *Ella Minnow Pea: A Novel in Letters*, by Mark Dunn [novel]
- A novel from a teacher-generated list [novel]
- “The Unknown Citizen,” by W.H. Auden [poem]
- *The Glass Menagerie*, by Tennessee Williams [play]
- *The Glass Menagerie* (1973 movie version) [movie]
- An novel selected independently [novel]

Goals and Assessments

What I Want the Students to Be Able to Do

Students will...

- Identify and analyze the appearance of societal structures, such as tradition, government, and laws, within texts.
- Identify and analyze the effects these structures have on characters within the texts, the actions of the characters as a response, and their eventual consequences.
- Identify the structures underlying their own lives.
- Explore their own feelings about these structures and the consequences of compliance and rebellion.
- Read and interact with a variety of genres and media, both traditional and nontraditional.
- Engage actively with the texts they read.
- Compose their own texts.
- Understand the relevance of literature as it pertains to their lives.

Goals

Students will...

1. Analyze a literary work that we have not read in class, noting the role that social structures play in the life of one of the characters and the choices and consequences that occur because of them.
2. Compose a creative work that explores the social structures that they see in their own lives and how they could react to them through the use of characters.
3. Keep a reading journal that enables them to interact with the texts that they are reading in a more visible fashion.

Assessments and Rubrics

Assessment One: Literary Analysis

Throughout this unit, we have explored the existence of structures that shape the lives of characters within texts. These societal structures, no matter what form they take, cause characters to take a stand, either compliance or rebellion, and eventually face consequences for their actions. For this assignment, I want you to select a book which we *have not read in class*, either one of your own choosing which I approve or one from a list I shall provide, and analyze the actions of a character within one of these structures.

You should include the following:

- An analysis of the societal structure as it appears in the work. (Some questions to ponder: Why is it there? What purpose does it serve? When

did it originate? Is it still functioning in the way it was intended? How do other characters view the structure?)

- An analysis of the actions one particular character takes in reaction to this structure. (Some questions to ponder: How does the character feel about this structure? Why does he feel this way? Does he eventually choose to comply or rebel? Is this a hard decision for him? Does anything spark or influence this decision?)
- An analysis of the consequences that result from these actions. (Some questions to ponder: Is he punished or praised? Does the perception of this character by others change? Does his perception of himself change? Is anyone else inspired by his decision?)
- A conclusion that serves a purpose beyond mere summarization. (Some questions to ponder: What is your opinion concerning the character's actions? How would you react if you were in the same situation? Do you consider the character to be admirable? Have you seen anything resembling the events of the text occur in our own society?)

Remember to back up all of your claims with evidence from the text! Your paper should be approximately 4-6 pages, double-spaced, in size 12 Times New Roman font.

Rubric

This rubric is loosely designed as to describe the form the product of this assignment should take. The papers are ranked according to the standard A-F grading scale. A paper would not have to meet all outlined criteria in order to receive a particular score; content always outweighs mechanics and formatting.

A paper that shall receive an A grade should...

- Discuss a book not read in class.
- Meet all requirements as given in the assignment. The student analyzes a societal structure within a work, the reaction of a character to it, and the consequences that follow. A conclusion is included which serves a purpose other than summarization.
- Show thought and insight in analysis. The student engages with the topic in a manner that shows a thorough understanding of it. In his conclusion, he may extrapolate upon the theme in such a way as to show its relevance in his own life in a thoughtful manner.
- Provide evidence that supports the claims given. The paper includes direct quotes or paraphrases from the text, which are incorporated in such a way as to give weight to the student's analysis.
- Be, as a whole, grammatically correct. While there may be some small grammatical errors, they do not interfere with or distract from the meaning of the paper.
- Fall approximately within the assigned page limits.
- Follow all formatting guidelines.

- Be turned in on time.

A paper that shall receive a B grade should...

- Discuss a book not read in class.
- Meet all requirements as given in the assignment. The student analyzes a societal structure within a work, the reaction of a character to it, and the consequences that follow. A conclusion is included which serves a purpose other than summarization.
- Show some thought and insight in analysis. The student engages with the topic but may not show as thorough an understanding of it as that of a paper that would receive an A. In their conclusion, they extrapolate upon the theme but may not do so as thoughtfully or insightfully as that of an A paper.
- Provide evidence that supports the claims given. The paper includes direct quotes or paraphrases from the text, which are incorporated in such a way as to give weight to the student's analysis. The connections between the evidence and the claims, however, may not be quite as clear as those of an A paper or be incorporated in as deft a manner.
- Be, as a whole, grammatically correct. While there may be some small grammatical errors, they do not interfere with or distract from the meaning of the paper.
- Fall approximately within the assigned page limits.
- Follow all formatting guidelines.
- Be turned in in a timely manner.

A paper that shall receive a C grade should...

- Discuss a book not read in class.
- Meet all requirements as given in the assignment. The student analyzes a societal structure within a work, the reaction of a character to it, and the consequences that follow. A conclusion is included which serves a purpose other than summarization.
- Show some thought and insight in analysis. The student attempts to engage with the topic but does not do so as thoroughly or as in depth as in a B paper. The student attempts to include some insight within their conclusion but may not do so as successfully as a B paper.
- Provide evidence that supports the claims given. This evidence may not be as immediately relevant or as successfully integrated as in a B paper.
- Have few grammatical errors that distract or interfere with meaning.
- Fall short of the assigned page limits (i.e. barely 3 pages when it is supposed to be 4).
- Follow all formatting guidelines.
- Be turned in in a timely manner.

A paper that shall receive a failing grade should...

- Discuss a book which we have read in class or which is unsuitable for the assignment and was not approved.

- Not meet the requirements given for the assignment. The student may not include one or more of the following in their analysis: a societal structure, the actions of a character in response to it, or the consequences that follow. The conclusion does nothing but summarize.
- Show no thought or insight in analysis. The student does not show any understanding of the topic and does not engage with it except on the most shallow of layers. Their conclusion may only summarize their thesis and not include any synthesis or application of the topic.
- Not provide any evidence to support claims or provide evidence that has nothing to do with the claims being made.
- Be so grammatically challenged as to interfere with a reader's understanding of it.
- Fall drastically short of the assigned page limits (i.e. 1 or 2 pages instead of 4).
- Blatantly ignore formatting guidelines. The font may be three sizes too big, or the margins may be resized in such a way as to add false length to the paper.
- Be turned in drastically late.

Assessment Two: Creative Writing

Throughout this unit, we have read texts that explore the structures that shape our world and the way that characters react to them. Now it's your turn to do your own exploration! I want you to write a creative work that emulates the structure we have seen in class. Feel free to use any genre you feel inclined to use, and, above all else, create a text that has meaning *for you*.

A reader should be able to identify in your text the following items:

- A large societal structure.
- A character that chooses either to comply or rebel against the precepts of this structure.
- The catalyst that prompts the character's decision.
- The consequences of this character's actions.

Some genres you may want to consider: short story, poem, ballad, play, one-act, obituary, haiku, newspaper article, script, newscast, fairy tale, fable, comic strip. Feel free, however, to choose whatever genre best serves your purpose.

Rubric

This rubric is loosely designed as to describe the form the product of this assignment should take. The papers are ranked according to the standard A-F grading scale. A paper would not have to meet all outlined criteria in order to receive a particular score; content always outweighs mechanics and formatting.

A paper which shall earn an A grade should...

- Show thought and insight in its approach of the topic. The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the topic and its applications. The approach may be unusual in scope or thoughtful in its portrayal of a situation.
- Meet all requirements. In their text, the student includes a societal structure, a character that responds to it, the catalyst that causes this reaction, and the consequences that follow. The reader can clearly identify all of these characteristics without any difficulty.
- Use genre effectively. The particular instance that the student discusses suits the genre that he chose. The elements of the chosen genre are all present; any departures from the standard are appropriate to the treatment of the topic.
- Be of an appropriate length to fit both the genre and the story told through it.
- Be turned in on time.

A paper that shall earn a B grade should...

- Show some thought and insight in its approach of the topic. The student shows understanding of the topic, but this understanding may not be as thorough as in an A paper. The approach may also be thoughtful but not as creative in its application.
- Meet all requirements. In their text, the student includes a societal structure, a character that responds to it, the catalyst that causes this reaction, and the consequences that follow. The reader can identify all of these characteristics, but they are not as distinct as they are in an A paper.
- Use genre somewhat effectively. The particular instance that the student discusses is appropriate for the genre chosen. Most of the elements of the genre are present; departures are few but seemingly without reason.
- Be of an appropriate length to fit both the genre and the story told through it.
- Be turned in in a timely manner.

A paper that shall earn a C grade should...

- Show little thought and insight in its approach of the topic. The student attempts to show his understanding of the topic, but the result is not entirely effective as in a B paper. The approach is somewhat thoughtful but rather clichéd or unoriginal.
- Meet most requirements. An attempt is made to include all of the specified items, but they are harder to identify than in a B paper.
- Make an attempt at using genre effectively. The story they are trying to tell may not suit the genre they have chosen. Many of the elements of the genre are present; departures are few but seemingly without reason.
- Be of an appropriate length to fit either the genre or the story but not necessarily both.
- Be turned in in a timely manner.

A paper that shall earn a failing grade should...

- Show no thought or insight in its approach of the topic. The reader is unable to tell whether or not the student understands the topic, and the result is haphazard, not merely ineffective as in a C paper. The approach is neither thoughtful nor original.
- Meet few requirements. One or more items specified in the assignment may be deliberately absent. The items that are included are difficult for a reader to identify.
- Not attempt to use genre effectively at all. The story does not fit the genre chosen. Few elements of the genre are included; it may be difficult to discern which genre the student is attempting to use.
- Fall short of a length appropriate to both the genre and the story told.
- Be turned in drastically late.

Assessment Three: Reading Journal

As you are reading the texts I assign in class and you read on your own outside of it, I would like for you to keep a reading journal in which you jot down your thoughts, questions, and connections with the text. Although I will be occasionally checking to see what you are writing and that you are completing the work, keep in mind that this assignment is primarily to help *you*. Many of the ideas, which you note here, may be of use to you in completing future assignments or be something you may wish to bring up in class discussions.

Some ideas of things to think about while you are reading:

- Do the events of the text remind you of anything else you have read?
- Do the events of the text seem similar to anything that you have experienced or heard about?
- Do you feel a personal connection to any of the characters?
- Do any of the characters remind you of anyone you know?
- Do you think that you would react in the same way as the character?
- If you were to meet this character, what questions would you want to ask them?
- Does anything in the text make you wonder or question?

While these questions include a small sample of some of those that you may be asking yourself as you are reading, do not feel hampered by them. The purpose of this assignment is for you to explore, to try on different hats, not to try and write down what you think I might want. My only request is that you *write*.

Rubric

This rubric is loosely designed as to describe the form the product of this assignment should take. The papers are ranked with a check-plus representing above-average effort, a check representing average effort, and a check-minus representing below average effort.

A reading journal that shall earn a check-plus should...

- Show thought and insight. There is almost superfluous evidence that the student is actively reading and interacting with the text. The student approaches the text from a variety of different angles and makes connections between the world of the text and his own. The student may touch upon ideas and connections that the teacher has not even thought about.
- Meet all requirements. The journal is turned in when asked, and the notes within it relate to the text in some manner.

A reading journal that shall earn a check should...

- Show some thought and insight. While the student is actively engaging with the text or attempting to, the evidence is not as substantial as that for the check-plus student. While the student may make an attempt to come at the text from different angles, he has one particular angle that he likes and uses a disproportionate amount of the time. The student makes connections between the world of the text and his own, but they may not be as thoughtful nor as profuse as that of the check-plus student.
- Meet all requirements. The journal is turned in when asked, and the notes within it relate to the text in some manner.

A reading journal that shall earn a check-minus should...

- Show little thought and insight. The notes are haphazard and few and far between; the student may be engaging with the text, but there is little proof to that end. The student only uses one angle and never tries any others. The student makes few connections between the world of the text and his own.
- Meet few requirements. The journal is turned in late, and the notes within are only partially related to the text.

References

Smagorinsky, Peter. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Materials

The teacher should have available:

- Class sets or copies of all assigned texts, if not available in textbook
 - “The Yellow Wallpaper,” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
 - “The Story of an Hour,” by Kate Chopin
 - “Spelling,” by Margaret Atwood
 - “The Game,” by Judith Ortiz Cofer
 - *Ella Minnow Pea: A Novel in Letters*, by Mark Dunn
 - “The Unknown Citizen,” by W. H. Auden
 - *The Glass Menagerie*, by Tennessee Williams
- A copy of the 1973 movie version of *The Glass Menagerie*
- Small sets of any novels used in the literature circles
- Butcher paper in varying shades
- Markers in varying shades
- Post-it notes (optional)
- Copies or overhead transparencies of all appropriate handouts
- An overhead projector (optional)
- A whiteboard or similar apparatus
- Many small long slips of colored paper

Students should have available:

- A journal or notebook which can be used as a reading journal
- A copy of the independent novel they choose for their literary analysis

Daily Lesson Plans

Based on an average class period of 50 minutes.

Any information that is not directly included in a handout is assumed to be verbally given to the students or written on the whiteboard.

Day One

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping. Pass out handouts and explain assignment. First, students will fill out the questionnaire (attached separately) on their own. Make sure to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers at this juncture. This activity concerns their opinions.

5 minutes: Students fill out questionnaire independently.

10 minutes: Students get into small groups of about three and discuss the statements. The teacher should be floating around the room; although she should not interfere, she should make sure that the discussions are on topic and not getting out of hand.

20 minutes: Large group discussion. Each of the small groups reports back on their beliefs about the statements on the handout. The teacher should act as a facilitator, asking for elaboration where necessary, making sure that all of the groups are involved, and keeping the conversation moving.

This portion can proceed one of two ways, depending on the students' talkativeness: (1) the discussion can follow a very linear, "let's talk about the first statement" format, with each group speaking about each statement, or (2) the discussion is more organic, and the statements are discussed in a way that makes sense according to what the students want to say. The ultimate course of the conversation lies in the hands of the students.

If conversation stalls, ask for students to come up with scenarios that prove or disprove their opinions. Hopefully, these more concrete examples should help anchor the rather abstract concepts the students are dealing with. This tactic can either be completed free-style or in a more formal get-back-in-your-groups-and-report-back way.

5 minutes: Wrap-up. The teacher should tie together the discussion the students just had, touching on several pertinent or astute comments that the students made.

5 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should reflect and write down three things in your life that they feel confine them in some manner.

Day Two

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

10 minutes: For this segment of the period, the teacher should find some way to discuss the homework that was assigned the night before. Depending upon the dynamics of the class, there are several routes that this discussion may follow: (1) if the teacher feels that her students would be comfortable with it, then she could just ask for volunteers to share one of the items that they wrote down; or (2) if the teacher feels that her students would prefer not to share their homework so blatantly, especially as this can be a touchy subject, then she can volunteer some of the more common answers (“school,” “parents,” “laws”) and have students raise their hands if they wrote something similar.

No matter which format the discussion ultimately uses, the goal is to have the students see that they all have similar forces acting upon their lives. The teacher should then ask students to elaborate upon their response (“What it is about school/your parents/the law that you feel is so constricting?”). As the discussion progresses, the teacher should be mindful of the time; this discussion may have the potential to run over if the students are engaged.

15 minutes: Reading Journal Demonstration

At this point, the teacher should pass out the assignment sheet for the “Reading Journal” assignment (see Appendix C), and the students should turn to the short story “The Yellow Wallpaper.”

The teacher should begin by modeling the format of the reading journal that students should be working on throughout this unit. As the teacher begins to read the opening lines aloud, she should demonstrate, through thinking out loud during pauses, what she would write if she were completing a journal entry. She should try to do the following during her reading:

- Make connections to events in her life or other things she has seen or read.
- Ask questions.
- Reflect on how she would react if she were in the character’s situation.
- Speak about anything else that the reading brings to mind.

Ideally, this oration should be relatively “cold,” or unprepared. The goal is more to give students a realistic view of how this project would go than to impart any particular information.

This demonstration can continue for as long as the teacher deems necessary; if students begin to raise comments and questions themselves, then that is even better.

15 minutes: After the teacher finishes, the students should continue reading “The Yellow Wallpaper,” working on their reading journal as they do. The teacher should be wandering around the room, looking at their work and noting quietly any astute comments or questions. This activity should take the rest of the period.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should finish “The Yellow Wallpaper” and think about what forces are acting upon Charlotte’s life.

Day Three

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

15 minutes: Final Assessments

After attendance has been taken, the teacher should pass out the handouts for the final assessments for the unit (see Appendices A and B). For the next segment of the period, the teacher should go over the assignments and the rubrics that pertain to them, taking the time to make sure that the students understand the basic concept behind them and answering any questions that may arise. The teacher should also make sure to inform the students that an understanding of the key components of the papers will come during the rest of the unit.

10 minutes: This first ten minutes is a time for the students to bring up any questions they had about the short story or raise any comments about the reading. Anything that the students found either unclear or particularly interesting can be addressed while in the large group; as the rest of the period has a more concrete focus, this time is to be as student-centered as possible.

20 minutes: Modeling of Graphic Organizer

After the initial discussion of the short story, the teacher should segue into the question that the students focused on for their homework: what forces act upon Charlotte's life? The teacher should keep track of their responses on a whiteboard or similar apparatus. As they answer, the teacher should ask for elaboration (for example, "Okay, so in what way does Charlotte's gender affect her life? Can you name an example from the story?")

After a fair number of responses are on the board or the discussion sputters to a halt, the teacher should either pass out copies or put up an overhead projection of the "Social Structures Graphic Organizer" (see Appendix F). For the rest of the period, the teacher should, with the aid of the class, demonstrate how to fill out the chart. Using one of the responses, which may require rewording to accurately represent a social structure, gathered, the class should discuss what choices Charlotte made because of it and what consequences followed from those choices, using specific examples from the story as much as possible.

If time allows, continue the exercise with either another social structure or another character in the story.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should read "The Story of an Hour," making sure to keep track of their reading in their reading journals.

Day Four

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

10 minutes: This first ten minutes is a time for the students to bring up any questions they had about the short story or raise any comments about the reading. Anything that the students found either unclear or particularly interesting can be addressed while in the large group; as the rest of the period (once again) has a more concrete focus, this time is to be as student-centered as possible.

10 minutes: Modeling of Graphic Organizer, Part II

This segment of the class should act in a similar manner to the modeling of the graphic organizer for the other story on the day before. Students should extrapolate what forces may be acting on the lives of the characters, and then apply this knowledge and their understanding of the story to fill in the “Social Structures Graphic Organizer.”

As “The Story of an Hour” is shorter and less clear, this activity should provide more of a challenge than the previous day’s. If time permits, then continue the modeling with another social structure or with another character.

25 minutes: Small Group Activity

The teacher should break the class into small groups of four to five students and ask them to discuss the similarities and differences between the two works, particularly in terms of the social structures at work in the lives of the protagonists. The students should represent these similarities and differences through some graphic representation (for example, a Venn diagram) that they will either turn in to the teacher or, time permitting, present to the class.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should read Margaret Atwood’s poem “Spelling” and Judith Ortiz Cofer’s poem “The Game,” making sure to keep track of their reading in their reading journal.

Day Five

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

10 minutes: The first ten minutes of class, once again, acts as a forum for questions and initial responses to the two poems. Here is the place where the items that they wrote in their reading journal the night before have a chance to be discussed in a larger forum. The teacher should try to keep the discussion as student-centered as possible, asking for elaboration and opening questions to the floor as much as possible.

20 minutes: Small Group Activity

The teacher should break the class into small groups of four and five and ask them to complete the “Social Structures Graphic Organizer” in terms of a character in one of the two poems. The two poems should be evenly distributed; roughly two groups, or more or less depending on class size, should be focused on each poem.

The teacher should be floating around the room to answer questions; the poems present a greater challenge than the short stories and therefore difficulties may arise. The teacher should also make sure to remind the students that extrapolation might be necessary. All the information they require may not be clearly presented in the poem.

10 minutes: After the students finish, the teacher should bring the class back together. For the next segment of the class, the students should discuss the similarities and differences between the two poems, using the graphic organizers that they completed as a starting point. Depending on time remaining, the teacher may ask each group to individually share their work or just enter into the discussion immediately.

If time allows, the teacher can segue into a discussion of the similarities between these two poems and the two short stories which the students read earlier in the week.

5 minutes: Collect Reading Journals

The teacher should collect the students' reading journals, which shall be taken as a grade at this point.

Day Six

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements. Give out *Ella Minnow Pea*.

15 minutes: Introduction to *Ella Minnow Pea*

The teacher should begin by introducing the students to the main structural element in *Ella Minnow Pea*: the novel is told entirely through letters. To this extent, the teacher should begin by assessing what knowledge and experience the students may already have with letters. Some questions that may guide the large group discussion are as follows:

- Have you ever written or received a letter from a distant relative or pen pal?
- What elements make up a letter?
- What is the difference between a letter, a telephone conversation, and an email?
- Do you think that letters are still valid forms of communication today?

After the teacher has some notion of how well versed the students are on the topic, then the teacher should use this information to structure the introduction of the novel. If the students seem confused and at a loss, then the teacher may want to begin with a short lecture on these topics. If the students are prepared, then the teacher can continue forward with the lesson.

5 minutes: At this point, the teacher will also want to introduce the organizer that the class will be using to explore this novel. As novels often have more elements at work simultaneously than a short story or a poem, a single graphic organizer may be insufficient. The class, therefore, will be constructing a large graphic organizer upon one of the walls using a large piece of paper and either markers or post-it

notes, depending on the format of the class and whether or not one sheet of paper may need to serve multiple purposes.

Different colors (either of markers or of post-it notes) will be used to distinguish between different elements:

- Characters
- Social Structures
- Choices
- Consequences

These colors should remain constant throughout the week.

These elements should be connected, much like in the smaller organizer, through arrows or other connecting devices. They should also, whenever appropriate, include page numbers.

20 minutes: *Ella Minnow Pea* (pages 1-15)

For the next twenty minutes, the teacher should begin reading through the first fifteen pages of the book. How this reading progresses depends upon the class; the teacher can choose to take primary responsibility for the reading, or this demand can be placed upon the students.

As the reading progresses, the students should be alert for any of the elements that were noted earlier. If a student sees one of these elements in the work, then he or she should be recognized and get the chance to write or place the element on the wall organizer. Towards the beginning, the teacher may want to model how this process would work, either through demonstration or clear instructions. By the end of the period, however, the students should be able to act without much prompting.

3 minutes: Pass back out reading journals. The teacher may take the time to note any trends in the students' work, either things that the class in general did very well or things that the class in general needs to improve upon before the next reading journal check.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should read pages 15-70 of *Ella Minnow Pea* for homework, making sure to keep track of their reading in their reading journals.

Day Seven

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

30 minutes: Small Group Activity

The teacher should break the class into small groups of three to four students apiece and assign each group a small portion of the 55 pages, which they read for homework the night before. Depending on the size of the class, each group should receive approximately ten pages, each ending at the close of a letter.

Each group should then go through their section and discuss how to represent their section of the story on the wall organizer. While the students are discussing,

the teacher should be floating around, available for questions and prodding, when applicable.

10 minutes: For the final ten minutes, the groups should have the chance to put their elements on the wall organizer, if they have not done so already. As many of the elements flow from one to another, it may make sense to ask groups to come up sequentially. If time allows, the teacher should either read and comment upon what groups have put up or ask groups to explain their reasoning, if necessary.

5 minutes: Announce Chapter Assignment

For the next two days, the students will be completing much the same task with larger sections of the book. The teacher should at this point announce the assignment of chapters to groups, which should consist of approximately four to five people. The assignments should be as follows:

- Group 1: 71-96
- Group 2: 96-124
- Group 3: 125-144
- Group 4: 145-166

2 minutes: Announce Homework

All students should read pages 71-124 of *Ella Minnow Pea* for homework, making sure to keep track of their reading in their reading journals. Students whose group assignment falls within this range should pay especially close attention to their section.

Day Eight

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

30 minutes: Small Group Activity

The first two groups, whose focus was covered in the reading for the night before, should take this thirty minute segment to complete a task similar to what they did in smaller groups the day before: representing their twenty or so pages through the use of the wall organizer. As this will be the second time that they will have completed this task in small groups, albeit with smaller chunks, the teacher's responsibility should be to remain aware for questions; they should know the drill at this point.

Simultaneously: Alternate Small Group Activity

As the other groups are working with the wall organizer, the groups whose focus was not included in the reading should be working on an alternate activity: writing a letter from the viewpoint of a minor character that is not included in the novel. The students should try to include the following in their letter:

- The name of their character.
- Their character's feelings towards the edict set forth by the government.

- Their character's relationship to other characters in the book.
- The actions (or lack thereof) the character may decide to take in the future due to the edict.

The letters should be as long as is reasonable for the thirty-minute time frame. The teacher should be focusing slightly more on these groups as they are tackling a new creative project and should be available for questions and other facilitation needs.

15 minutes: Presentations

After the class is brought back together, the two groups who were focusing on the wall organizer should have the opportunity to share their work with the class. They should explain what elements they chose to put up on the wall and why they thought the element fit the category they chose for it. In preparation for the literary analysis paper, the teacher should attempt to prompt the groups to take their work one step further: making judgments about the character based on their choices or elaborating on why the character may have made this choice over another.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

All students should read pages 125-166 of *Ella Minnow Pea* for homework, making sure to keep track of their reading in their reading journals. Students whose group assignment falls within this range should pay especially close attention to their section.

Day Nine

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

30 minutes: Flip-Flop Small Group Activities

At this point, the groups from yesterday should flip-flop their activities; the two groups who presented yesterday should have the opportunity to create their letter, and the groups whose focus was now covered in the reading should have the opportunity to use the wall organizer. Although the participants change, the format of the activities should remain the same.

15 minutes: Presentations

After the class is brought back together, the two groups who were focusing on the wall organizer, once again, should have the opportunity to share their work with the class. They should explain what elements they chose to put up on the wall and why they thought the element fit the category they chose for it. In preparation for the literary analysis paper, the teacher should attempt to prompt the groups to take their work one step further: making judgments about the character based on their choices or elaborating on why the character may have made this choice over another.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should read pages 167-208 of *Ella Minnow Pea* for homework, making sure to keep track of their reading in their reading journals.

Day Ten

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Large Group Activity

At this point, the teacher should begin to talk about rebellion vs. conformity. The teacher can ask students what images or concepts the two words bring to mind, how they differ from one another, and how they may appear through actions.

After the students have a grasp of the concepts, the teacher should have them split into two teams (one being “rebellion” and the other “conformity”) and race to see who can circle the most choices on the wall organizer.

The rules are as follows: Each group has a different color of marker, preferably bright colors. During their turn, a student should go to the wall organizer find a choice that fits their category (either “rebellion” or “conformity”), and circle that choice with the marker. After they finish, they should hand the marker to the next student, who then goes to the wall organizer. Play should continue in this tag-team fashion until there are no more choices on the organizer to be circled or every student has had one or two turns (depending on how fast play is progressing).

If time allows afterward, then the small groups can share their letters from earlier in the week.

2 minutes: Collect Reading Journals For a Grade

Day Eleven

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

40 minutes: Book Talks

As a prelude to the literature circles that the class will be engaging in throughout the next week, the teacher should introduce them to the books that they will be able to choose from. Taking no more than five minutes per book, he or she intend to hit upon a number of elements:

1. Basic author information, focusing mainly on what other books they have written that the students may be familiar with and the author’s signature style.
2. Genre, including atypical elements, if necessary.
3. Hook/Plot summary, which can be either self-made or off the back of the book.
4. Testimonials, if available. After they finish reading and present, these short reviews may be something that the students create themselves for the next year’s students. If the teacher has read the book, he or she might mention some of the aspects of it that he or she enjoyed (making sure to include no spoilers, of course).
5. Other pertinent information, such as how long it is.

5 minutes: After hearing a brief introduction to each of the books, students should write down their top three choices and turn them in. Although they may not get their first choice, they should get to read one of the books they choose.

Day Twelve

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements

20 minutes: Auden's "The Unknown Citizen"

The teacher should begin by either placing a copy of the poem onto the overhead or passing out a copy to the students if it is not available in their textbooks. After all the students can see the poem, the teacher should begin by reading it out loud; she can either do this herself or call on a student to read it instead. (This portion should take no more than 5 minutes.)

Afterwards, the teacher should give the students a moment to digest the material and to read back over it if needed. Then the teacher should begin a large group discussion, focusing on some of these key points:

1. Do you think that Auden's citizen is happy?
2. What sorts of structures is the citizen a part of?
3. How does the protagonist of the poem differ from protagonists in other works we have read?
4. Is conformity a choice?
5. In what other places do we see this kind of conformity?
6. How does this topic relate to *Ella Minnow Pea*?
7. How may an understanding of conformity be applicable to your future reading?

If the discussion falters or ends early, the teacher can ask students to, with the people sitting near them, decide how conformity looks in school.

Examples: always does their work even if they don't like the subject, may not speak in class unless called upon, may not be fully engaged in the assignments

After they have a short list, ask them to call out some of their responses. (The timing for this portion of the assignment, if taken, should be however much time is left in the twenty minutes minus three minutes for this part of it. If time is too short, the teacher may want to just move on to the next segment.)

15 minutes: Introduction to Literature Circles

After passing out the appropriate handout (See Appendix E), the teacher should take about 15 minutes in order to introduce the class to the literature circle method that they will be using for the following week. The students will be in groups of around four, based on which books they preferred to read, and each student will take on a *responsibility* and a *role*. The students should also be warned ahead of time that, after their literature circle meets four times, they are responsible to give a presentation to the class about the social structures in their novel and the choices characters make within them.

Responsibilities last for the duration of the reading and allow students a chance to make notes in their reading journal that should help prepare them for the presentation. There are four responsibilities, each focusing on a slightly different aspect of the novel:

1. Plot: This member is responsible for keeping track of the plot as a whole. Sample questions to think about: What actions are characters taking? How do they fit into the story the author is trying to tell?
2. Major Characters: This member is responsible for choosing two to three major characters and tracing their choices and the consequences they face. Sample questions to think about: What binds the characters? What other choices do they have? How do they view their own actions?
3. Minor Characters: This member is responsible for choosing two to three minor characters and tracing their choices. In addition to the questions for major characters, this member should also consider these: Do these characters make different choices from the major characters? How does this affect them? If they do, what is different about these characters?
4. Setting: This member is responsible for analyzing the setting of the novel and how it plays a role. Warning: this role may require some outside research! Sample questions to think about: What social structures are in place in this time and location? How do the characters fit within them?

Roles are far more generalized than responsibilities and may be rotated among the students in the group. Rather than focusing on a defined part of the story, these roles give students a job within the group itself.

1. Facilitator: This member is responsible for making sure that the group stays on task and that everyone has a chance to speak.
2. Scribe: This member is responsible for taking notes about the discussion that may be used in the presentation.
3. Questioner: This member is responsible for three good discussion questions for the group as a whole.
4. Artist: This member is responsible for visually depicting some aspect of the story; this visualization may be used in the presentation as well.

The teacher should take the full amount of time to make sure that every student understands the responsibilities and roles and the way that literature circles will play out. The teacher should also feel free to draw on either Auden's "The Unknown Citizen" or other works the students have read for illustrative purposes.

Example: What might you draw or create based on the poem we just read? If you were responsible for the setting, what might you focus on in the poem?

10 minutes: After the large group lecture on literature circles, the teacher should announce the groups and give them a few minutes to get together and plan. Once the students know what group they are in, they should rearrange desks into four-desk squares, with two desks facing two other desks; this arrangement shall be the

standard for any time they get into the literature circles, and this expectation should be expressed to the students.

While the students are moving around, the teacher should begin giving each group their books. After everything has settled down, the teacher should announce that the students should now use this time to decide on the roles and pages read for the next day the literature circles will meet: the day after next. The students have until the bell to discuss and decide. The teacher should be on hand to mediate should any major disagreements occur.

Day Thirteen

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements

15 minutes: In preparation for the creative writing assignment, which is one of the unit's final assessments, the class should, as a whole, begin to brainstorm possible topics. Drawing upon the works they have read in class and their literature circle novels, the students should list as many social structures as they can. The teacher should record this list either on the board or on an overhead transparency for future reference.

Examples: government, religion, education

If this activity fails to take up the entire fifteen minutes or if the students' answers trail off halfway through, the teacher can ask students to look back at the list and tell how the social structures manifest themselves in society.

Example: government → traffic laws, speed limits, voting, campaigns, funding, standards, curfews, television advertisements

5 minutes: After wrapping up the class brainstorming activity, the teacher should ask the students to get into groups of no more than four people. Although these groups should not be the same as the literature circle groups, they should use the same desk arrangement: four desks in a square with two pairs of desks facing each other.

After they are settled, the teacher should quickly explain the next part of the activity: in small groups, the students are to choose one or two of the social structures on the board and brainstorm a list of choices which a character would have within that structure. Afterwards, they should also think about possible consequences to the choices and what may cause a character to make that choice.

Examples: (traffic laws) *choices*: speed, drive the speed limit, drive about five miles over the speed limit, don't drive at all, get a radar detector; *consequences*: may get a speeding ticket, may be late to work, may find oneself waiting for the bus, may not get the girl because you don't have a car, may lose your driver's license, may wreck, may be fined; *catalysts*: being late to work, having gotten caught in a safety check, hearing about someone else's epic crash, watching the news, having already gotten a ticket, if your wife is having a baby

The teacher should make sure to emphasize coverage over depth; the goal here is to have students come up with as many possibilities as they can. Later, there will be a chance for the students to explore their favorite choices in detail.

30 minutes: For this portion of the class, the small groups should begin brainstorming, using the list of social structures already generated by the class as a basis, possibilities for their creative writing assignment. While they work, the teacher should be floating around the room, nudging students to think creatively about their choices. If a group seems finished early, the teacher should either ask them to begin to narrow down some of their choices and consequences in preparation for the next part of the assignment or point out some areas where they can go back and fill in more possibilities.

Day Fourteen

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements

10 minutes: This is a chance for the class to briefly discuss the previous day's brainstorming. It can be used either to share particularly interesting or creative ideas or to complain about how hard it is to come up with this sort of stuff, depending on the make-up of the class. The teacher may want to guide discussion using some thoughtful prompts, such as:

1. How difficult was it for your group to generate ideas?
2. Did being part of a group help you think?
3. Do you feel that, with the material you have, you could write your creative writing assignment?

This final question is the most pertinent. If the students feel that they do not have enough material, then some of the following day's class may need to be devoted to a continuation of the activity. If the entire class is having trouble, then some time may be needed for an entire class brainstorming session.

10 minutes: Before the literature circles meet, the teacher should take between five and ten minutes to remind the students of the qualities of a good discussion. Ideally, the teacher should just be able to ask the question "What does a good discussion look like?" and the students should respond, as this skill has already been developed throughout the unit.

If students flounder, the teacher should quickly remind them of the following points:

1. In a good discussion, students are listening to one another. (Instead of, for example, thinking about what is for lunch)
2. If you disagree with what someone else has said, say so in a polite manner. (Don't say, "That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard!")
3. Everyone should have a chance to speak. (In other words, make sure that you don't talk too much!)

25 minutes: Literature Circles

Following the guidelines that have already been laid out for them, the students should meet in their literature circle groups to discuss the first portion of their novel. The teacher should be floating around the room and should only interfere if necessary. As she is walking around, she should also be making sure that the students have all the prescribed materials (illustrations, summaries, etc.), which will constitute a check-off grade.

Day Fifteen

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements

5 minutes: Students should quickly rearrange their desks in the standard group formation. After they finish, the teacher should explain the day's assignment: using the material they produced earlier in the week, the group will now choose a structure, choice, consequence, and catalyst and create a piece of creative writing together in preparation for the individual one later in the unit. This assignment can be in any form; the only request is that the form suits the function (the genre should be able to effectively tell the story the students are trying to tell).

30 minutes: For the next thirty minutes, the students should be working together in groups. The teacher should be floating around, guiding students to an appropriate genre if they are struggling and checking on their progress.

10 minutes: After the thirty minutes is over, call the class back together. If many groups are not finished, then this step may be postponed. Until the bell, try to share as much of the students' work as possible.

Day Sixteen

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Literature Circles

Following the guidelines set out for them, the students should meet to discuss the next portion of their novel. The teacher should be floating around the room and should only interfere if necessary. As she is walking around, she should also be making sure that the students have all the prescribed materials (illustrations, summaries, etc.), which will constitute a check-off grade.

Day Seventeen

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Literature Circles

Following the guidelines set out for them, the students should meet to discuss the final portion of their novel. The teacher should be floating around the room and should only interfere if necessary. As she is walking around, she should also be

making sure that the students have all the prescribed materials (illustrations, summaries, etc.), which will constitute a check-off grade.

Day Eighteen

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Literature Circles

At this point, the students should be largely finished with their book. Their focus, therefore, should be on gathering the necessary materials for their presentation either tomorrow or the following day. The teacher should be floating around the room, making sure that the students are prepared and on-track. Towards the end of the forty-five minutes, the students should be able to show the teacher their visual aid and explain an overview of their presentation.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Two days from now, the students should have made a book choice for their individual literary analysis.

Day Nineteen

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Presentations

For the majority of today and tomorrow, the students should present their book to the class. In their presentations, students should make sure to include the following elements:

- A short summary of the events of their novel.
- A short report on the setting of the novel.
- An analysis of one major character.
 - At least one social structure that acts on him or her.
 - At least one choice that he or she makes because of this force.
 - At least one consequence that occurs because of this choice.
- An analysis of one minor character.
 - At least one way in which he or she differs from the major character, either in terms of social structures acting on him or her, choices that he or she makes, or consequences that result.
- A visual aid, which may be a graphic organizer, an artistic representation of some element of the novel, or a combination of both.

While they are presenting, the teacher should be noting the absence or presence of each of these four major elements. After the group finishes, they should turn their visual aid and any notes that they may have compiled in to the teacher. As an alternative, the teacher could also let another group complete the checklist instead or simultaneously, depending on the nature of the class.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be reminded that their book choices for their literary analysis are due tomorrow.

Day Twenty

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

40 minutes: Continuation of Presentations

The day should act as a continuation of the previous day, allowing any groups that did not have a chance to give their presentation an opportunity to do so.

5 minutes: Literary Analysis Book Choices

The teacher should walk around the room and either have each student tell her what book they are reading or pass around a list on which they can write down their choices.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be able to submit a rough draft of their creative project for peer editing tomorrow and should begin reading their independent novel.

Day Twenty-One

4 minutes: Attendance/Announcements. Pass out copies of *The Glass Menagerie*.

10 minutes: Introduction to *The Glass Menagerie*

At this point, the teacher should provide a short introduction to *The Glass Menagerie*. She should provide a brief overview of the author's life, touch upon the concept of a "memory play," and remind students of some of the elements of drama which they may have forgotten (for example, monologue, aside, props, costumes, set). The goal is to give students a quick refresher course and lecture so that they can begin reading the play in class the next day without too much difficulty.

30 minutes: Peer Editing

Students should all have a copy of a draft of their creative assignment that their peers can edit. The teacher should break the class into groups of five, and the students should quickly arrange their desks into a square plus one format.

Peer editing should progress in a rotation, so that each student has a chance to read the work of everyone else in his or her group and to focus on each element of the assignment. Papers should always be passed to the right, and each "round" focuses on having the readers identify a different element of the assignment, as follows:

- Social Structure
- Character
- Catalyst
- Consequence

If the element is present, then the student reading the paper should write the element and put a check mark beside it on the front page of the draft. If the element is unclear or missing, then the student should put either a question mark or an “X” instead of a check mark. Students are also encouraged to write other constructive comments on the paper as well.

After all four rounds are complete, the paper should then be returned to the owner, who then has a chance to look over the comments on their paper. The remainder of the period should be spent either in revision or reading.

1 minute: Announce Homework

Students should be reading their independent novel and polishing their creative assignment.

Day Twenty-Two

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

30 minutes: *The Glass Menagerie*—Scenes 1-2

The teacher should begin by assigning parts on a volunteer basis for each of the characters in the play. These parts will be rotated throughout the period. The teacher can either read scene directions or assign a student to do so.

For the next thirty minutes, the class should read through the first two scenes of *The Glass Menagerie*, pausing when necessary for part rotation, clarification, or elaboration. The students should be particularly aware of what social structures are in play in this work, how these structures affect the characters, and the differences in identifying these elements in a play and the other works they have focused on so far this unit.

15 minutes: Movie Version

For the final fifteen minutes, the class should watch the movie version of the two scenes that they have just read. As the movie progresses, the teacher should pause where necessary for clarification. Either during the two scenes or after they finish, depending on the engagement level of the students, the teacher should ask them to elaborate on how having a visual representation of the work helps or hinders their ability to identify the forces acting on the characters and whether or not this representation changes their understanding of the play so far.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be reading their independent novel and polishing their creative assignment.

Day Twenty-Three

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

5 minutes: Plot Review

The teacher should briefly summarize the events of the day before, either through the questioning of students or a short lecture.

40 minutes: *The Glass Menagerie*—Scenes 3-5

The teacher should break the class into groups of three or four and assign each group a small portion of scenes three, four, and five, which should be distributed in such a fashion so that all of the three scenes are covered. The students should then prepare their segment of the play for a performance; they should figure out what the characters' choices and motivations are, decide how to transmit this information through action, blocking, and tone, and practice their piece. Students who are not directly involved in acting should act as either directors or narrators for their groups' productions.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be reading their independent novel and polishing their creative assignment.

Day Twenty-Four

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

5 minutes: The teacher should allow the students to go on and get in their groups so that they can quickly refresh their memory and practice their lines before they perform.

30 minutes: Presentations

Going in order chronologically throughout the scenes, each group should perform for the class. After they conclude their presentation, a spokesperson for the group should tell the audience what choices they made and how it affected their performance.

10 minutes: *The Glass Menagerie*—Scene 6

For the next ten minutes, the teacher should play the 1973 movie version of the next scene, taking time to pause for clarification and elaboration when necessary. The discussion should be focused on the character of Jim, who is a new character for the students, and what forces seem to be acting on his life.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be reading their independent novel and polishing their creative assignment, which is due tomorrow.

Day Twenty-Five

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements. Collect creative assignments.

30 minutes: *The Glass Menagerie*—Scene 7

Similar to what occurred for the first two scenes, the teacher should assign students parts, which shall be rotated as they read through the scene so that every student who wishes to participate can have the opportunity to do so. Once again, the teacher can either read the stage directions or assign a student to do so. When necessary, the teacher should pause for clarification, elaboration, and part rotation. The discussion should focus on the final choices which Tom makes, their relationship to the structures that he feels confined by, and the consequences of these actions.

15 minutes: Movie Version

For the remainder of the class, the teacher should play the movie version of the final scene, pausing for elaboration and clarification where necessary. The discussion should focus on any differences between the representation that the movie version shows and the ideas that the students had already developed and how these differences affect the students' understanding of the play.

Day Twenty-Six

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Small Group Work

For a large portion of the next several days, the students shall be working on creating body biographies of each of the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*. The teacher should break the class into four groups, and each should be assigned a character: Tom, Amanda, Laura, or Jim. Using an outline of a human figure traced on a sheet of butcher paper, students should try to graphically represent their understanding of the characters.

This information should include the following:

- At least three significant quotes said by or about the character.
- A graphical representation of what the character holds most dear in the location of the heart.
- A representation of the beliefs or ideologies of the characters located in or near the head.
- A graphical representation of the social structures that affect the character located in an appropriate place.
- At least three other unique elements that are located in an appropriate location.

Students should feel free to go far beyond these simple guidelines and be as creative as possible; the goal is to create the fullest representation of a character possible, not to complete the bare minimum needed.

As this work continues, the teacher should be floating around the room, available for questions and prodding where necessary.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be preparing drafts of their literary analyses, which can be edited by their peers tomorrow.

Day Twenty-Seven

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Peer Editing

Students should all have a copy of a draft of their literary analysis that their peers can edit. The teacher should break the class into groups of five, and the students should quickly arrange their desks into a square plus one format.

Peer editing should progress in a rotation, so that each student has a chance to read the work of everyone else in his or her group and to focus on each element of the assignment. Papers should always be passed to the right, and each “round” focuses on having the readers identify a different element of the assignment, as follows:

- Analysis of a Social Structure
- Analysis of Character Actions
- Analysis of Consequences
- Conclusion (that does not summarize)

If the element is present, then the student reading the paper should write the element and put a check mark beside it on the front page of the draft. If the element is particularly interesting or well argued, then the student should also place a star. If the element is unclear or missing, then the student should put either a question mark or an “X” instead of a check mark. Students are also encouraged to write other constructive comments on the paper as well.

After all four rounds are complete, the paper should then be returned to the owner, who then has a chance to look over the comments on their paper. The remainder of the period should be spent either in revision or working on body biographies, if all members of the group are finished.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be polishing their literary analyses.

Day Twenty-Eight

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Small Group Work

Following the guidelines set out for them earlier, the students should continue working on their body biographies. The teacher should once again be floating around the room, available for questions and prodding where necessary. If students finish early, the teacher should remind them that they will be giving a presentation on their body biography the following day and therefore should be considered what to say during it.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be polishing their literary analyses.

Day Twenty-Nine

3 minutes: Attendance/Announcements.

45 minutes: Presentations of Body Biographies

Each group should present their body biography, making sure to mention their reasoning for each of the elements that they included. If necessary, the teacher may prompt groups to explain or elaborate. The rest of the class should ask questions and comment on the presentations.

2 minutes: Announce Homework

Students should be polishing their literary analyses.

Day Thirty

5 minutes: Attendance/Announcements. Collect literary analyses.

5 minutes: The students should return to the anticipation guide that they completed earlier in the semester and, individually, decide if any of their answers would change.

20 minutes: After the students have had a chance to individually assess their responses, the teacher can open the floor to large group discussion, focusing on what changes they see and why these changes in thinking may have occurred.

20 minutes: Catch-up

These twenty minutes are the allowance in this unit in case activities run over or the class as a whole falls behind. If unneeded, it can be used to play some sort of educational game or continue discussion.

References

Smagorinsky, Peter. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Appendix A

Assessment One: Literary Analysis

Throughout this unit, we have explored the existence of structures that shape the lives of characters within texts. These societal structures, no matter what form they take, cause characters to take a stand, either compliance or rebellion, and eventually face consequences for their actions. For this assignment, I want you to select a book which we *have not read in class*, either one of your own choosing which I approve or one from a list I shall provide, and analyze the actions of a character within one of these structures.

You should include the following:

1. An analysis of the societal structure as it appears in the work. (Some questions to ponder: Why is it there? What purpose does it serve? When did it originate? Is it still functioning in the way it was intended? How do other characters view the structure?)
2. An analysis of the actions one particular character takes in reaction to this structure. (Some questions to ponder: How does the character feel about this structure? Why does he feel this way? Does he eventually choose to comply or rebel? Is this a hard decision for him? Does anything spark or influence this decision?)
3. An analysis of the consequences that result from these actions. (Some questions to ponder: Is he punished or praised? Does the perception of this character by others change? Does his perception of himself change? Is anyone else inspired by his decision?)
4. A conclusion that serves a purpose beyond mere summarization. (Some questions to ponder: What is your opinion concerning the character's actions? How would you react if you were in the same situation? Do you consider the character to be admirable? Have you seen anything resembling the events of the text occur in our own society?)

Remember to back up all of your claims with evidence from the text! Your paper should be approximately 4-6 pages, double-spaced, in size 12 Times New Roman font.

Appendix B

Assessment Two: Creative Writing

Throughout this unit, we have read texts that explore the structures that shape our world and the way that characters react to them. Now it's your turn to do your own exploration! I want you to write a creative work that emulates the structure we have seen in class. Feel free to use any genre you feel inclined to use, and, above all else, create a text that has meaning *for you*.

A reader should be able to identify in your text the following items:

1. A large societal structure.
2. A character that chooses either to comply or rebel against the precepts of this structure.
3. The catalyst that prompts the character's decision.
4. The consequences of this character's actions.

Some genres you may want to consider: short story, poem, ballad, play, one-act, obituary, haiku, newspaper article, script, newscast, fairy tale, fable, comic strip. Feel free, however, to choose whatever genre best serves your purpose.

Appendix C

Assessment Three: Reading Journal

As you are reading the texts I assign in class and you read on your own outside of it, I would like for you to keep a reading journal in which you jot down your thoughts, questions, and connections with the text. Although I will be occasionally checking to see what you are writing and that you are completing the work, keep in mind that this assignment is primarily to help *you*. Many of the ideas that you note here may be of use to you in completing future assignments or be something you may wish to bring up in class discussions.

Some ideas of things to think about while you are reading:

1. Do the events of the text remind you of anything else you have read?
2. Do the events of the text seem similar to anything that you have experienced or heard about?
3. Do you feel a personal connection to any of the characters?
4. Do any of the characters remind you of anyone you know?
5. Do you think that you would react in the same way as the character?
6. If you were to meet this character, what questions would you want to ask them?
7. Does anything in the text make you wonder or question?

While these questions include a small sample of some of those that you may be asking yourself as you are reading, do not feel hampered by them. The purpose of this assignment is for you to explore, to try on different hats, not to try and write down what you think I might want. My only request is that you *write*.

Appendix D

Name: _____

Date: _____

Social Structures Questionnaire

On the blank space next to each statement, write whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. Expectations are only something that your parents have for you.
2. You should always follow the rules.
3. Nothing outside of your own thoughts and goals affects your actions and decisions.
4. All of our choices have consequences.
5. No matter what the circumstances, our lives could always be better than they are right now.
6. It is always better to go along with others than to disagree and stand out.
7. Everything happens for a reason.
8. Anyone could change the world if they have the will and the determination to do so.
9. Rebellion serves no useful purpose in the real world.
10. All consequences are negative.

Appendix E

Literature Circle Responsibilities and Roles

While you are in your literature circles this week, each member of your group will have a *responsibility* and a *role* that should help you focus your group discussion. *Responsibilities* will help prepare you for your presentation; each one focuses on an aspect of your novel and should help guide your reading of it. *Roles* should help your group function better; they range from making visuals to making sure someone is taking notes.

While I encourage you to switch *roles* every time your literature circle meets, *responsibilities* should be a novel-long project, so decide carefully!

Responsibilities

1. **Plot:** You are responsible for keeping track of the action of the novel.
Some questions to think about:
 - a. What actions are the characters taking?
 - b. How do these actions fit into the story as a whole?
2. **Major Characters:** You are responsible for choosing one to three of the major characters and noting what choices they make and what consequences they face.
Some questions to think about:
 - a. What binds the characters?
 - b. What other choices do they have?
 - c. How do they view their own actions?
3. **Minor Characters:** You are responsible for choosing one to three of the minor characters and noting what choices they make and what consequences they face. In addition, you should note if their choices and consequences differ from those of the major characters and see if you can figure out why.
Some questions to think about:
 - a. Do these characters make choices different from those of the major characters?
 - b. If they do, what is different about these characters?
 - c. How does these actions affect them?
4. **Setting:** You are responsible for investigating the setting of the novel and seeing what sorts of social structures are in place and how the characters fit within them. This responsibility may require some outside research in order to be optimally effective.
Some questions to think about:
 - a. What social structures are in place in this time and location?
 - b. How do the characters fit within them?

Roles

1. **Facilitator:** You should make sure that the group remains on task and that everyone has a chance to speak.
2. **Scribe:** You should be taking notes that the group can later draw on for the presentation.
3. **Questioner:** You should bring in three good discussion questions for the group to think about.
4. **Artist:** You should visually depict one or more aspects of the novel; these visuals can later be used in the presentation.

Appendix F

Social Structures Graphic Organizer

Character: _____

